

March 29, 2007

Science Committee Passes Science and Math Scholarship Act
Legislation includes Akin Amendment

WASHINGTON, DC- Yesterday, Congressman Todd Akin (R-Mo), added language to the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act passed by the Science Committee.

According to a science committee press release: H.R. 362 increases scholarships for students majoring in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and who are committed to pursuing teaching; establishing a teacher education program at the National Science Foundation to encourage education faculty to work with STEM faculty on ways to improve education for math and science teachers; providing in-service training to math and science teachers to improve content knowledge and teaching skills; and authorizing the development of master's degree programs for in-service math and science teachers.

The bill is widely supported by industry, education groups and scientific professional societies. A National Academies report has found that a majority of 8th grade students received math instruction from a teacher with no math certification or degree. I also noted that in 2000, 92 percent of 5th-9th graders were taught physical science by a teacher with no science degree or certification.

"I would like to thank Chairman Gordon (D-Tn) for supporting my amendment and for his leadership on this important issue," said Akin. "We need to ensure that we maintain our competitive edge in science, math and technology by encouraging science professionals to teach our next generation of scientists and engineers."

Akin's amendment specified that any funds appropriated under the act would not be diverted to the development of K-12 curriculum, but dedicated to the training of math and science teachers.